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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

June 4, 2008

The Honorable Steven Preston
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Preston:

On May 29th, a massive fire that engulfed the Highlands at Dearborn apartment complex in Peabody, Massachusetts, destroyed a four story building and left several hundred residents temporarily displaced. Thankfully, no one was injured in the flames that razed the apartment building; however the number of units that were destroyed clearly falls over the disaster declaration threshold. Preliminary findings report 27 apartments had major damage, 24 apartments had minor damage, and one business suffered minor damage due to the fire.

We are appreciative of the efforts made by Governor Patrick to certify this incident as a physical disaster for the purposes of authorizing federally-administered low interest disaster loans to the victims of the fire. We encourage you to do everything in your power to provide low interest loans through SBA's disaster assistance program, and to do so as quickly as possible. The victims of the Peabody fire deserve nothing less than a swift and effective response from the federal agency responsible for providing disaster assistance to homeowners and small business owners. We pledge you our support in doing whatever it will take to ensure that the owners of the units destroyed are given every opportunity to rebuild and thrive.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or a member of our staffs. We look forward to working with you and with your staff to ensure a speedy recovery for the home and business owners impacted by the fire.

Sincerely,


John F. Kerry
US Senator


Edward M. Kennedy
US Senator


John F. Tierney
US Representative